



Embassy of the United States of America  
Lisbon, Portugal



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## Atlantic Notes

"From our shores to yours"

### Editorial



This year, Ramadan is scheduled to start in late August, but long before that the attentions of the world were cast on the speech that President Obama made in Cairo, last June 4th, when he addressed all of the Muslim world.

It is fair to say that there is another portrait of American-Muslim

relations that is often not known to the larger public. On this page, you will find some of that information that portrays America welcoming the change in tone of this Administration.

Change is also the buzzword in Europe, where the election for the European Parliament brought big surprises across the club, this past week.

On the month of the European election, we recall some of the state-

ments made by well-known Americans following their adventures in Europe, and we bring you a final interview with Ambassador Stephenson, who is soon to return to the United States.

A peek at Michigan and a glance at our 25th anniversary in Sete Rios conclude this last issue before summer.

Enjoy the sun! ❖

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### Religious Freedom in the U.S.

Religious diversity in the United States dates back to the colonial era, and traditions of tolerance have a long history. Today, as the United States has become the world's most religiously diverse society, people of different faiths adjust to a different geo-religious reality.

A Pew Institute survey showed that Protestantism remains the dominant strain of Christianity in the U.S. with 51%, while Roman Catholics account for about a quarter of those surveyed. Jews repre-

sent 1.7%, as do Mormons, while the Muslim share of the adult population is estimated to be 0.6 percent and is mainly located in the West and Midwest of the United States. Roughly two-thirds of Muslim Americans are immigrants, generally mainstream in their outlook, values, and attitudes.

Almost one in six adults are not affiliated with any particular religion, a population that has been growing in recent decades.

The U.S. Constitution offers protections for religious minorities and for religious practices in general.

More workers are demanding the right to exercise their freedom of religion on the job. By law they have a right to reasonable accommodations to their schedules. They sometimes encounter resistance from coworkers or bosses. But in a growing number of court cases, employees have the law's enforcer on their side. ❖

**THERE AN ESTIMATED  
1,209 MOSQUES IN  
AMERICA, WELL OVER  
HALF FOUNDED OVER  
THE LAST 20 YEARS. BE-  
LOW THE WELL-KNOWN  
MICHIGAN MOSQUE**





19TH CENTURY  
FRENCH POSTER



LOOKS LIKE AN AMERICAN  
FJORD, DOESN'T IT?



## Did you know that...?

*For months the great pleasure excursion to Europe and the Holy Land was chatted about in the newspapers everywhere in America and discussed at countless firesides. It was a novelty in the way of excursions--its like had not been thought of before, and it compelled that interest which attractive novelties always command. It was to be a picnic on a gigantic scale.*

The excerpt is from Mark Twain's travel book, "The Innocents Abroad," first published in 1869. 140 years later, the European election is a pretext for us to review

some famous American quotes on Europe and the Europeans.

My wife loves Europe, but to me it's a bad day at a theme park. **Jay Leno**

To understand Europe, you have to be a genius - or French. **Madeleine Albright**

Asking Europe to disarm is like asking a man in Chicago to give up his life insurance. **Will Rogers**

That Europe's nothin' on earth but a great big auction, that's all it is. **Tennessee Williams**

Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris. **T. G. Appleton**

London: A place you go to get bronchitis. **Fran Lebowitz**

The sorrows and disasters of Europe always brought fortune to America.- **Stephen Leacock** ❖

## STATE of mind: Michigan

"They say this is where life began — Mackinac Island State Park, a landscape characterized by high limestone bluffs, beautiful vistas of sparkling water, vibrant forests, and mystical geological formations. With automobiles banned since 1898, here exists a quieter way of life away from interstate noise of cities. Over 80 percent of Mackinac Island is within Mackinac Island State Park—free of charge and open year round—where you'll discover the true natural gems of Mackinac. Whether visiting this island parkland by foot, bike, horseback, or carriage, these many majestic geological wonders and unique historical monuments are visual treasures found only here—on the island sacred to the Ojibwa and Odawa Great Lakes Indian Tribes. According to them, this is where life began. You're invited to discover why." Thus reads the website of Michigan state's government.

Derived from the Indian word *Michigama*, meaning great lake, Michigan reached statehood in 1837. A decade later, Detroit ceased being its capital, giving way to Lansing. Michigan's nicknames are Great Lakes State or Wolverine State - yes, just like the movie that is now showing at Portuguese theatres! Michiganians believe they have so much to enjoy in their own state that their motto is "if you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you!"

That's why I suspect that famous Michiganians such as personalities Magic Johnson, Serena Williams or Sugar Roy Robinson or celebrities Steven Seagal and Tom Selleck would most likely endorse this invitation for you to visit Michigan. ❖

For more information, visit <http://www.michigan.gov>



## ***U.S. Ambassador - A Farewell Interview***

*As he prepares to leave Lisbon midmonth, Thomas Stephenson agreed to weigh the last year and a half in Lisbon.*



**Eighteen months have gone by and you are now about to leave Post. What has the experience of Ambassador been like, for you and your family?** Spectacular, it is an extraordinary opportunity that we viewed as a family adventure. It has been great for Alexander and for the 'embaixatriz' and it has been a terrific experience for me. There was an adjustment for all of us, especially for Alexander --the size of the school, the social environment, the fact that he is living an hour from school has made it a little more difficult for him to participate in the social activities... On the other hand, playing basketball for Benfica was a unique experience for him and, frankly, took us all over the country. Several people have told me that I have seen towns in Portugal that no other US Ambassador has ever visited. We have had a fantastic time!

**Despite the short tour, how would you describe your legacy to bilateral relations?** I think it's always better to let the historians talk about legacy. I would hope that we will have accomplished a variety of things. I have my fingers crossed, but most of the issues

related to the Lajes airbase and the Azores will be wrapped up by the time I leave. I am sure there will be new issues down the road, but there are a number of important issues we have been able to address in a positive and cooperative fashion with the regional and mainland governments. A disproportionate amount of our bilateral time has been spent on Lajes issues and I think it would be nice to expand the agenda to a lot more issues. Other than that, our relationship with the government of Portugal is excellent right now; there has been important leadership on the part of Minister Amado and others -- whether on Guantanamo, or Afghanistan. I also hope we have made a difference talking about energy and climate change with Secretary Bodman's visit... Maybe we helped the dialogue about education with the recent visit of former Secretary for Education Margaret Spellings...A significant portion of what the embassy does is reactive, following what Washington wants us to do with the government of Portugal but you also have some leeway to do other things on a proactive basis.

### **What was most difficult issue?**

One of my disappointments results from the fact that I was not able to do more on entrepreneurship and venture capital. Portugal still has a long way to go. Some of the issues are educational, others are cultural, but we have helped move the dialogue. One of the things I think I will be able to help with is a mission to Silicon Valley that is in the discussion stage here. So I hope to have excuses to stay associated with Portugal, and we will certainly be back because we have fallen in love with this country.

**You knew the State Department as a U.S. citizen, now you are an insider. Is this the organization you imagined it would be?** There is some element of frustration, because

you are not able to implement things as quickly as you would in the private sector. A good example is my attempt to have a DEA officer located here instead of being served out of Embassy Madrid. We had an agreement on that about a year ago, and there are still no signs of a DEA officer being headquartered here. On the other hand, I had heard a number of cynics talk about the department's bureaucracy and nothing could be further from the truth. I will walk away with several strong impressions -- the very high caliber and dedication of our senior military and Foreign Service officers around the world.

**You are not quite an American in Paris, but you have been an American in Europe for a while now. As a candid observer, do Americans and Europeans have more in common or more that divides them?** There is no one-sentence answer to that; it is a very complicated relationship. Some say that Brits and Americans are two countries divided by a common language, so when you get to countries that have no common language the division is prospectively even wider.

And there are certainly significant differences, but, by and large, we have the same beliefs and convictions. Sure we have differences in implementation but I don't think that people understood, certainly did not appreciate, what the Bush Administration was trying to do. My view is that History will end up treating the Bush Administration far better than it is currently thought of. Transition has helped; there is an enormous reservoir of good will for President Obama. Hopefully, President Obama and the new Administration will take full advantage of it. ♦



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## Coming up

☞ **July 2nd** - Embassy Celebration of Independence Day 2009.  
Official Holiday on July 4.

☞ **July 11 - 12** - Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, Lisbon

## WE ARE ON THE WEB!

Please visit us at

<http://portugal.usembassy.gov>  
and



## BACK TO YOUR DESK AFTER SUMMER!



## @ a Glance: The last quarter century



CURRENT AMBASSADOR  
THOMAS STEPHENSON  
(LEFT) WITH FORMER  
COLLEAGUES EVERETT  
BRIGGS AND GERALD  
MCGOWAN.

The U.S. Embassy in Lisbon recently marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. chancery in Sete Rios with a special ceremony.

Two former U.S. Ambassadors to Portugal – Ambassador Everett Briggs and Ambassador Gerald McGowan – revisited Lisbon for the celebration, joining dozens of guests and past and present employees.

Ambassador Stephenson read a special letter from then Secretary Schulz who inaugurated the chancery in 1983 and DCM David Ballard gave voice to messages sent by Secretary Clinton and former ambassadors who were unable to travel. The event also featured a special exhibit on the last quarter century in diplomatic relations, nostalgic testimo-

nials by employees who have been with the US government for over 25 years and music was not forgotten. All in all, a day well spent!

### Portugal as Seen by Previous Ambassadors

“As the first Ambassador to occupy the splendid new chancery 25 years ago, I salute the Portuguese nationals who have made the Embassy the professional diplomatic establishment it is today.”  
*Alan Holmes*

“The cold war still held sway and our Azores relationship remained very important. But the Portuguese remained strong friends and their friendship and warm and expansive hospitality were undiminished.”  
*Edward Rowell*

“I thank you **P**ortugal, for the many **P**s of the **P**resent and the **P**aths of the great explorers whose **P**ast is not **P**ast. Of these many **P**s, it is the **P** in **P**eople that makes **P**ortugal so **P**owerfully Grand.” -- *John Palmer*

“I’ve no doubt that the tradition of excellence long held by U.S. Embassy Lisbon as the calm and steadfast arbiter of our values is alive and well today as you weather the storms of the world economic recession and the ever-present dangers of an increasingly unstable world.”  
*Elizabeth Framley Bagley*

“I am grateful to have been Ambassador in Portugal.”  
*Alfred Hoffman*

